

## IRAN'S POLICIES DURING WORLD WAR II

In these circumstances all sections of the population with fixed income, especially the government employees, were greatly victimized. Bribery, not an uncommon phenomenon in the East, often became a necessary device for a government official to survive. The morale of public servants was lowered considerably, and this opened the road to foreign intrigue. It was not difficult for a foreign legation to "buy" a newspaper, an editorial writer, or an underpaid employee in one of the administrations.

With all these changes in Iran, one factor, however, remained rather constant, namely, the ruling class. This class was composed of wealthy landowners, wealthy merchants, and higher army officers. The deposition of Reza Shah might have eliminated from office a number of individuals, but those who replaced them did not represent a different social stratum. Thus many criticisms that could be addressed to the former ruling clique likewise could be maintained against the new cabinets. The selfish and economically unprogressive attitude of the ruling circles did nothing to endear them either to the masses, despite new official liberalism, or to facilitate their position vis-a-vis the Soviet-sponsored extremist elements.

Yet with all these inadequacies and handicaps the government still might have played a positive role if it had been ready to show determination in the event of foreign pressure. But this was seldom the case. There was marked reluctance among the politicians to become martyrs. And this general phenomenon overshadowed the courage and public spirit displayed by a few patriotic individuals.

## THE ROLE OF THE MAJLIS IN WARTIME

In order to understand fully internal conditions in

Iran during the war, an analysis of the role played by the parliament and the political parties is necessary. Although the cabinet changed after the deposition of Reza Shah, the Majlis remained unchanged for some time to come. It was filled with deputies who, in fact, often had been nominees of the late ruler. With the passing of the dictator the Majlis emerged as an independent force with which the government found it necessary to reckon. The role played by the parliament was not constructive in the Western sense of the word. There was little of which the Majlis could boast in the way of solving urgent